

ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW FEASIBILITY REPORT/CORRIDOR STUDY

Environmental Overview

An Overview is utilized for corridor studies or feasibility reports for which no project is programmed in the Five-Year Plan and no project can be reasonably forecasted to enter the Five-Year Plan in the short term (2-4 years). The environmental overview is not a stand-alone document, but is a component of the Feasibility Report or Corridor Study.

Objective of Environmental Overview

To: describe the social, economic, and environmental character of the study area;
identify potential “fatal flaws,” obstacles, issues associated with the study area; and
evaluate the study area alternatives.

The components of description, identification, and evaluation should be incorporated in the following or similar format:

I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Overview

II. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

A. Physical and Natural Environment

1. Topography/physiology (land form, drainages)
2. Vegetation (type, general species listing)
3. Biology (expected general species)
 - a. Threatened, endangered & sensitive species
 - b. Wildlife movement corridors
4. Hydrology (floodplains, water quality)
5. Noise (receptors)
6. Air Quality (attainment/non-attainment)
7. Hazardous Materials (PISA)
8. 4(f) (cultural resources, parks, recreation, refuges)

Note: 4(f) applies to federal funds only

B. Socioeconomic Environment

1. Land Use (land ownership, residential , commercial, neighborhoods, undeveloped, grazing, etc.)
2. Socioeconomics (employment, etc.)
3. Title VI/Environmental Justice
4. Right-of-Way (existing)
5. Utilities

C. Cultural Resources

Historic/Prehistoric (records, literature review)

III. ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

A. Physical and Natural Environment

1. Land Form (visual, forested, mountainous, flat, drainages, etc.)
2. Sensitive Species/Habitat (vegetation, wildlife, T&E, riparian etc.)
3. Water Quality (wetlands, 404, 401, 402)
4. Hazardous Materials (PISA recommendations)
5. 4(f) (cultural resources, parks, recreation, refuges)

B. Socioeconomic

1. Relocations (residential/commercial)
2. Land-Use Change/Employment Impacts/Access
3. Title VI/Environmental Justice
4. R/W Acquisitions (comparative acreage)
5. Neighborhood/Community

C. Cultural Resources

Historic/Prehistoric (recommendations for Class II representative sample survey or Class III-intensive field survey)

IV. CONCLUSION

Objective conclusion regarding appropriateness of the study area alternatives and future project programming.

May provide an evaluation for the corridor or alignment that results in a preferred or recommended project.

Note: When the project is programmed, or forecasted to be programmed within a reasonable timeframe, the NEPA process will be required for environmental clearance

Recommendations for further investigations may also be made.

V. CONSULTATION/COORDINATION

A. Coordination (letters, agency meetings, etc.)

B. Public Involvement (public meetings, newsletter, survey).

No public hearing(s) would occur, as the hearing activity is a component of the NEPA process and the Environmental Overview is not a NEPA document.

Level of effort for (II) Affected Environment:

Define/describe existing conditions through:

- 1) agency coordination letters, meetings;
- 2) map review;
- 3) literature review;
- 4) windshield survey;
- 5) public information meetings.

No field survey for cultural resources should occur.

A site visit may be required to assess potential habitat for TES species.

Corps of Engineers jurisdictional determination survey may be requested and included.

Technical noise analysis or air quality analysis would not occur.

Noise analysis should be limited to noting numbers, type, and general location of receptors.

Air quality analysis should note whether a project is in an attainment/non-attainment area and any special federal, state, or local regulations that would apply to the study area.

Level of effort for (III) Environmental Concerns and IV Conclusion:

Identify issues, potential impacts or “fatal flaws,”
no subjective analysis, only objective documentation, and
the document may utilize a matrix to compare/contrast alternatives and summarize
information.

As the environmental overview is not a NEPA document or environmental approval document, and no actual project is programmed, the analysis should avoid using terms such as significant, substantial, major, minor, etc.

No formal Section 106 consultation would occur.

Determination of effort or eligibility for cultural resource sites would not occur, unless the information was existing (i.e., known National Register eligible site).

Section 7 Consultation (T&E species) would not occur, as Section 7 is project or action specific.

Section 404, 401, or 402 permits would not be obtained, but identified as to potential type(s) of permit that may be required.

Section 4(f) determination would not occur, but identified as to potential.